

Graduate Student Handbook

English Department | Northern Illinois University



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1. Introduction

The Department of English offers a variety of options within its degree programs for the Master of Arts and the Doctor of Philosophy. This handbook has been written to inform graduate students of the rules and procedures which pertain to those degrees and to augment the policies and regulations contained in the Graduate Catalog.

It is the responsibility of each student admitted to the Graduate School to know and to observe all regulations and procedures related to the degree being sought as outlined in either the catalog in effect at the time of admission or the catalog in effect at the time of graduation. Regulations will not be waived nor will exceptions be granted because a student pleads ignorance of the rule or because he or she was not informed of it by an adviser or other authority. In particular, students planning to obtain a degree should be aware of the deadlines for filing the necessary documents in the Graduate School.

The rules, procedures, and standards described in this booklet are determined by the Graduate Faculty of the Department of English and are administered by the Graduate Studies Committee, by the Director of Graduate Studies, and by the Chair of the department. As changes are made in various requirements, they will be communicated to the department in the form of addenda to this handbook and by memoranda to students. Students must stay abreast of these changes. Individual questions or problems may be addressed to the student's adviser or to the Director of Graduate Studies.

2. Admission to the M.A. and Ph.D. Programs

All decisions about admission to graduate degree programs offered in English are made by the Director of Graduate Studies upon recommendation by the Admissions and Standards Subcommittee of the Graduate Studies Committee. When the applicant's admission file is complete in the Graduate School, it is forwarded to the department for evaluation. The department's decision to admit, to admit with certain provisions or stipulations, or not to admit is reported to the Graduate School, which in turn notifies the applicant. Although the Graduate School has specific application deadlines for each semester (July 15 for fall, December 10 for spring, June 1 for summer), admission decisions are made on a continuing basis throughout the year upon receipt of application credentials from the Graduate School.

2.1. Requirements for Admission

Our requirements are designed to assure students accepted into the M.A. and Ph.D. programs that they are likely to succeed in their degree work.

2.1.1. Native English-Speaking Applicants

The department ordinarily expects the following:

M.A. degree

- Minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0
- Minimum English course GPA of 3.2
- Minimum verbal GRE score of 550
- Minimum GRE score in writing of 4.5
- Two letters of recommendation from professors

Ph.D. degree

- Minimum graduate GPA of 3.2
- Minimum verbal GRE score of 600
- Minimum GRE score in writing of 4.5
- Three letters of recommendation from professors
- A sample of academic writing

The Admissions Subcommittee of the department's Graduate Studies Committee examines and weighs students' credentials in light of the requirements listed above, balancing each requirement with the others in order to estimate the potential for success that the "package" suggests. Excellent letters of recommendation, for example, may compensate for slightly insufficient GRE scores, or strong GRE scores may compensate for a slightly insufficient GPA.

Applicants to the Ph.D. program who have completed an M.A. degree may request waiver of the GRE scores. However, the English Department approves these requests only when the circumstances are compelling. Students seeking entry to the Ph.D. program who hold both a B.A. and an M.A. from NIU are required to submit a formal rationale for their application to the program.

2.1.2. International Applicants*M.A. degree*

Two credible, current letters of recommendation that speak specifically about the applicant's ability, surmised or witnessed, within an English-speaking environment
TOEFL IBT score of at least 80 or PBT score of at least 550.

Ph.D. degree

Three credible, current letters of recommendation that speak specifically about the applicant's ability, surmised or witnessed, within an English-speaking environment
TOEFL IBT score of at least 80 or PBT score of at least 550.

A writing sample, preferably of academic writing

2.1.3. Students-at-Large

A student may wish to take graduate courses without being formally admitted to a graduate degree program and may do so as a Student-at-Large (SAL). A student who matriculates as a Student-at-Large is subject to the regulations specified in the Graduate Catalog. A Student-at-Large should seek advice from the Director of Graduate Studies and may register for courses in the English department. Registration for graduate courses, however, in no way implies admission to the Graduate School. The Graduate School maintains SAL files until a student formally applies and is admitted to a degree program. Ordinarily, no more than a total of 15 transfer and SAL graduate hours may be applied toward a graduate degree. None of them will count toward a formal program of study for a degree unless approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

3. Master of Arts in English

3.1. Advising

The Director of Graduate Studies may be consulted on all matters of field and course requirements, of rules and regulations, of preparation for comprehensive examinations—on all questions, problems, and complaints about the graduate program. Appointments can be made through the Graduate Secretary in the English department office.

Students are assigned an adviser on the letter they receive when accepted into the program. Students may at any time petition the Director of Graduate Studies to change their adviser.

Program of Courses: M.A. students must consult with the Director of Graduate Studies or an assigned adviser to fill out the Program of Courses prescribed by the Graduate School. The Program of Courses lists the courses the student plans to take in pursuit of the degree; it also lists courses outside of English approved for the degree and may, with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies, list up to 15 hours of transfer credit for graduate courses taken at another university. This program should be filed the semester prior to graduation.

3.2. Tracks

The Department of English offers two tracks leading to the M.A. degree.

Track I

Track I is designed to prepare students for graduate work at the doctoral level. A student pursuing an M.A. under this option must

- earn a minimum of 30 semester hours of graduate credit in the Department of English (except as specified below for particular areas of study),
- demonstrate average proficiency in one foreign language (see below),
- and pass a comprehensive examination appropriate to the student's program after completing a minimum of 24 semester hours (see section 3.6).

Language Proficiency

Foreign language proficiency may be demonstrated in French, German, Greek (classical or koine), Italian, Latin (classical or medieval), Russian, Spanish, or another language approved by the Director of Graduate Studies on the basis of demonstrated need.

Languages other than Greek, Latin, French, German, Russian, Italian, or Spanish must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies on the grounds of their relevance to the student's program of studies.

To satisfy language requirements, students may demonstrate proficiency in a number of ways:

For average or high proficiency: an appropriate score on a translation examination on a non-fiction text approved by the Director of Graduate Studies administered by the Office of Testing Services (Adams Hall). [A guide to choosing a text for translation is available from the Graduate Secretary.](#)

For average proficiency: a grade of S (satisfactory) in a two-course sequence of special summer courses for graduate students offered by the Department of Foreign Languages (FLFR 381F/382L for French, FLGE 381F/382L for German, and FLSP 381F/382L for Spanish).

For average proficiency: provide documentation of a degree from a college or university at which the foreign language was the language of instruction. In some cases, an undergraduate major in a foreign language may be approved upon petition to the Graduate School as a demonstration of proficiency.

Students are urged to satisfy the language requirement as early as possible in their program.

Track II

Track II is designed for students whose professional interests and pursuits would benefit from a strong background in English. This track addresses the goals of students who are currently teaching in secondary schools or community colleges or who plan to teach at one of these levels, whether in literature, composition, or professional writing; students who plan to teach English as a second language; students who seek careers as technical writers, editors, or trainers; students interested in business or public relations; and practicing professionals in any field seeking to sharpen their skills and earn an M.A. in English. A graduate adviser and the student will design a program of study (subject to the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies) that must include 9 semester hours of study in subjects other than English and American literature, such as courses in the teaching of English, rhetoric, creative writing and composition, technical writing, linguistics, reading, mass media, public relations, or others that contribute to the student's professional development. A student pursuing an M.A. under this option must

- earn a minimum of 36 semester hours of credit, including at least 27 in the Department of English
- and pass a comprehensive examination appropriate to the student's program after completing a minimum of 24 semester hours in the Department of English (see section 3.6).

3.3. Areas of Study

The department offers seven plans of study. Exceptions in each plan may be made at the discretion of the Director of Graduate Studies.

3.3.1. British and American Literature

The focus on British and American literature involves intensive study of a wide range of literary texts and historical periods. This area of study is designed for those who wish to focus on literature and literary criticism, and who want a traditional master's program.

Required Courses

ENGL 601, Bibliography and Methods of Research (3)

Electives

Course work required in literature with consent of adviser (24 or 27)

Course work in non-literature courses (0-9)

3.3.2. English Education

This area of study is primarily designed for English language arts professionals who are currently teaching in the schools. It provides advanced study in pedagogical content knowledge for high school and middle school English teachers. Students interested in initial teacher certification in English should consult the teacher certification coordinator as soon as possible.

Required Courses

ENGL 601 Bibliography and Methods of Research

Electives in pedagogy (9 semester hours)

ENGL 604 Topics in Materials for the English Classroom (3-9)
 ENGL 622 Theories and Methods of TESOL
 ENGL 623 Second Language Acquisition
 ENGL 646 The Teaching of Literature in Middle and High Schools
 ENGL 647 The Teaching of Writing in Middle and High Schools
 ENGL 648 Materials and Methods of Teaching English in Middle and High Schools
 ENGL 697 English Institute

Electives in Language, Literature, and Rhetoric (15-24 semester hours)

In consultation with the advisor, choose at least two courses from literature, one course from linguistics, and one course from rhetoric (one semester of ENGL 600 may be used to satisfy the rhetoric requirement).

Other Electives (0-9)

In consultation with the advisor, as many as three (track I) or nine (track II) hours of course work may be taken outside the department in such areas as communication, curriculum and instruction, media, reading, special education, etc. (such as ESPY 508, TLSE 457, or EPFE 510, 520, or 521).

3.3.3. Film and Literature

The area of study in film and literature is a comprehensive, interdisciplinary examination of the relationships between traditional literary study and the cinema. This focus is designed for students from a wide variety of undergraduate degrees (communication, education, English, film, theater, etc.); for teachers in the broad range of language skills and art; and for professionals in the media. Its purpose is to study how the cinema engages, appropriates, and extends the forms, philosophies, and values of literature.

Available in Track II only:

Required Courses in English (12 semester hours)

ENGL 601 Bibliography and Methods of Research
 ENGL 604 Topics in Materials for the English Classroom (when topic is film)
 ENGL 690 Literature and Film
 ENGL 691 Topics in Literature and Film

Electives in modern British and American literature, rhetoric, or theory and criticism (24)

Course work in communication studies, instructional technology, history, and/or philosophy may be used as electives with consent of adviser.

Electives from outside the department are typically chosen from those listed below:

COMS 554	Transnational Communication and Media
COMS 556	History of Film
COMS 557	The Documentary Tradition
COMS 562	Film Theory and Criticism
COMS 566	Narrative Scriptwriting
COMS 649	Media and Culture in Ireland
COMS 656	Feminist Film Theory
ETT 430	Survey of Instructional Technology
ETT 455	Media Design Techniques
ETT 531	Visual Literacy
PHIL 562	Philosophy of Culture
PHIL 633	Aesthetics

3.3.4. Linguistics

The focus in general linguistics involves the scientific study of human language. Courses focus on the analysis of sound structure, word structure, syntax, and meaning in English and other languages, as well as on discourse, language variation, language teaching, and first and second language acquisition. This focus is designed for those with a particular interest in the structure and function of human language.

Required Courses

ENGL 608	Research Methods in Linguistics
ENGL 615	Descriptive English Linguistics
ENGL 617	Phonology
ENGL 618	Morphology and Syntax
ENGL 620	Semantics
	OR ENGL 633 Pragmatics and Discourse

At least one course from the following

ENGL 611	History of the English Language
ENGL 616	Pedagogical Grammar
ENGL 619	Varieties of English
ENGL 620	Semantics
ENGL 621	Topics in Linguistics
ENGL 623	Second Language Acquisition
ENGL 633	Pragmatics and Discourse
ENGL 634	Linguistics and Literature
ENGL 714	Seminar: English Linguistics

Additional coursework (12-18)

Coursework in Anthropology, Computer Science, English, Language, Philosophy, and/or Psychology, chosen in consultation with the adviser.

3.3.5. Literature and Rhetoric/Composition

The area of study in literature and rhetoric/composition allows the student to focus on the history of rhetoric, theories of rhetoric, analysis and production of text, and pedagogy. Complementary courses are offered in the Departments of English and Communication. Careful selection among the complements will encourage an interdisciplinary view of rhetoric.

Required Courses

ENGL 601	Bibliography and Methods of Research
	OR ENGL 625 Methods of Research in Professional Writing
ENGL 603	Traditions in Written Rhetoric
ENGL 610	Rhetoric of Prose Composition

Electives in Rhetoric and Communication (6-9 semester hours- If ENGL 601 is chosen, 9 semester hours are required in rhetoric and communication)

ENGL 600	Internship in the College Teaching of English
ENGL 602A	Literary Theory and Criticism: History of Literary Theory
ENGL 604	Topics in Materials for the English Classroom
ENGL 626	Technical Writing
ENGL 627	Technical Editing
ENGL 629	Topics in Rhetoric
ENGL 630	Theory and Research in Rhetoric and Professional, Technical Writing
ENGL 700	Topics in the Teaching of College English
ENGL 703	Seminar: Rhetorical Studies
COMS 600	The Classical Tradition in Rhetorical Theory
COMS 602	Contemporary Rhetorical Theory
COMS 603	Seminar in Public Rhetoric
COMS 604	Methods of Rhetorical Criticism
COMS 605	Theory and Uses of Argument
COMS 606	Communication Ethics
COMS 610	Symbolic Behavior and Communication
COMS 620	Rhetorical Approaches to Social Movements
COMS 640	Seminar in Communication and Gender
COMS 707	Seminar in Persuasion
COMS 760	Seminar in Rhetoric

Electives in literature (12-15 semester hours – If ENGL 625 is chosen, 15 semester hours are required in literature)

3.3.6. Rhetoric and Professional Writing

This area of study concentrates on various aspects of professional writing. It is intended for students and practicing professionals who wish to develop their writing skills in order to seek or advance a career in professional writing and who wish to explore the rhetorical, linguistic, and technological context of professional writing. This area of study is also intended for students who wish to pursue the master's degree in professional writing as a stepping stone to further graduate study.

Required Courses

ENGL 610	Rhetoric of Prose Composition
ENGL 625	Methods of Research in Professional Writing
ENGL 699	Master's Thesis

Course work from the following (9)

ENGL 609	Creative Writing
ENGL 624	Professional Writing Institute (1-6)
ENGL 626	Technical Writing
ENGL 627	Technical Editing
ENGL 628	Internship in Technical Writing, Research, or Editing
ENGL 632	Writing for Electronic Media
ENGL 692	Non-fiction writing

Two of the following (6)

ENGL 603	Traditions in Written Rhetoric
ENGL 629	Topics in Rhetoric
ENGL 630	Theory and Research of Rhetoric and Professional Writing
ENGL 631	Topics in Professional Writing
ENGL 703	Seminar: Rhetorical Studies

Two of the following (6)

ENGL 614	Introduction to Linguistics
ENGL 615	Descriptive English Linguistics
ENGL 618	Syntax
ENGL 620	Semantics
ENGL 633	Pragmatics and Discourse
ENGL 634	Linguistics and Literature

Electives (0-6)

Students may elect Department of English courses in rhetoric, literature, and linguistics or, with the faculty advisor's approval, courses in such areas as communication, education, journalism, art, business, technology, and instructional technology from other departments. Students in this area must demonstrate a competence in English grammar and usage by passing English 207 or by passing the grammar exemption examination.

The "Guide to Completing Your M.A. Thesis (for Graduate Students in the Professional Writing Area of Study)" is available from the Graduate Secretary.

3.3.7. Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

The area focuses on various aspects of teaching English to speakers of other languages. It is intended for students and educators who wish to study English as a Second Language (ESL), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), multicultural education, or communication skills.

Required Courses

Students are strongly encouraged to enroll in ENGL 615 and ENGL 622 in their first semester, if offered.

ENGL 608	Research Methods in Linguistics
ENGL 615	Descriptive English Linguistics
ENGL 617	Phonology
ENGL 618	Syntax
ENGL 622	Theories and Methods of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
ENGL 623	Second Language Acquisition

Additional course work (12-18)

Course work in anthropology, education, English, language, philosophy, rhetoric, and/or psychology, chosen in consultation with the adviser

3.4. The M.A. Thesis

In consultation with an adviser and in keeping with a program of courses, a student may elect to write an M.A. thesis (ENGL 699): an original work of scholarship and/or creative writing. A thesis requires a committee of three faculty members: a thesis director and two readers. Upon completion of the thesis, a defense of approximately one hour is scheduled, during which the thesis committee examines the student on the subject of the thesis. Following a successful defense, the thesis is submitted to the Graduate School in completion of degree requirements.

Students in the Professional Writing area of study are required to write an M.A. thesis.

3.4.1. Timing of a Thesis Proposal

Ordinarily, students register for ENGL 699 in the last semester of their M.A. work. The plan to write a thesis, however, and approval of the project by the Director of Graduate Studies should be in place at least one semester in advance of enrollment in ENGL 699. Because the completed thesis, formatted according to Graduate School regulations, must be submitted to the Graduate School by the middle of the final semester of course work and graduation, it must be completed and defended by the middle of the final semester. Students are advised to check the dates published annually by the Graduate School to be certain that they meet the established (and irrevocable) deadlines.

3.4.2. Procedures for a Thesis Proposal

- Approval by the Director of Graduate Studies of a thesis topic and adviser
- Submission to the Director of Graduate Studies of a thesis proposal

To propose an M.A. thesis (ENGL 699), in the semester before the semester of graduation, a student must:

(1) Seek an appropriate faculty member to direct the thesis.

(2) Write a thesis proposal according to the following format:

- working title for the thesis
- description of the project: the writer or the primary works or the creative writing project on which the project will focus, including a statement of the project's thesis and the issues the project will examine or the questions the project will answer or the problems the project will solve.
- statement of methodology: the tools and methods you plan to use in order to pursue the project
- statement of the previous scholarship in the field (situate your work in the conversation about the writer or texts that are your subject)
- bibliography, both primary and secondary
- signatures of the director and committee members

(3) Submit the completed proposal to the Director of Graduate Studies for approval, after which the graduate secretary will assist in enrollment in ENGL 699.

- In consultation with the thesis adviser, select a thesis committee consisting of the adviser and 2 graduate faculty members.
- An oral defense of the thesis (1 hour) is conducted by the thesis committee.
- Meet announced Graduate School deadlines for defense of the thesis and its submission to the Graduate School.

The Graduate School enforces fixed and immutable deadlines for submission of the M.A. thesis early in the semester in which the thesis is completed. Therefore, students should consult the Director of Graduate Studies, submit a thesis proposal, and start the research for the thesis at least one semester in advance of the semester of graduation. Students selecting the thesis option then ordinarily register for ENGL 699 in the last semester of their program. (The Graduate School requires continuous enrollment in ENGL 699 from the time of first registration until graduation.)

3.5. Independent Reading (ENGL 698)

Students may propose an independent study (ENGL 698, 1-3 hours), but, ordinarily, only after completing 30 hours of graduate course work. The semester in advance of enrolling for ENGL 698, an independent study director must be secured and a study/course proposal, signed by the director of the study and the student, must be submitted for approval by the Director of Graduate Studies. Independent study proposals must not duplicate regular course offerings.

3.5.1. Proposals

Ordinarily, students are permitted to enroll for ENGL 698 only after completing 30 semester hours of graduate work. Because ENGL 698 is intended to allow students to pursue work beyond regular course offerings, the course of study proposed for ENGL 698 should not duplicate courses listed in the catalog. Credits for ENGL 698 are variable, from 1-3. The scope and depth of an independent study that is to be assigned 3 semester hours should be equivalent to that of a regular 3-hour course offering.

3.5.2. Procedures

To propose an Independent Study (ENGL 698), a student must do the following a semester in advance of anticipated enrollment:

Consult with an appropriate faculty member about the proposed course of study and procure the consent of the faculty member to serve as director of the study.

Draw up a program of study according to the following format, using the ENGL 698 proposal form available from the Graduate Secretary:

- subject of the study
- semester, director, and number of credits (1-3)
- description of the course
- texts to be included, both primary and secondary
- requirements (number of meetings with the director; papers; examinations)
- signatures of student and director

Submit the completed independent study proposal, signed by the study director and the student, to the Director of Graduate Studies for approval, after which the Graduate Secretary will assist in enrollment in ENGL 698.

3.6. Comprehensive Examinations for the M.A. Degree

The department administers the comprehensive examination for the M.A. degree twice yearly, in October and in March.

To sit for the comprehensive examination, students must:

- Complete at least 24 hours of graduate course work in the Department of English.
- Fill out an application form (available from the Graduate Secretary) by the deadline announced in advance of the test date, and return it to the Director of Graduate Studies.
- Complete a program of courses form (available from the Graduate Secretary).
- Register for at least one hour of course work in the semester in which they sit for the exam.

Until one week before administration of the M.A. exam, a student may request to withdraw his or her name from the list of students to be examined. This request must be made in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies.

3.6.1. Examination Areas

Examinations are tailored to the plans of study in the M.A. program and require the following:

British and American Literature

Analysis of 6 texts (two from British literature before 1660, two from British literature after 1660, and two from American literature) and their place in historical and cultural context. The list of texts changes with each offering of the exam and is published in the first week of each semester.

English Education

Questions on the theory, research, and methodologies of teaching the English language arts in middle and secondary schools. The list of readings changes with each offering of the exam and is published in the first week of the semester.

Film and Literature

Three kinds of texts are set for this examination at the beginning of the semester: literary and cinematic theory; American and international cinema; and drama or fiction and their cinematic adaptations. The examination tests the ability to understand and use critical theory in literature and film analysis; to critique the literature-film relationship in adaptations; and to focus the issues and texts of literature-film research for pedagogical ends.

Linguistics

Demonstration of a broad fundamental knowledge of linguistic theory and its applications. Subject areas include phonology, morphology/syntax, and semantics/discourse analysis.

Literature and Rhetoric/Composition

A two-part examination, one part in literature and one part in rhetoric. The literature section requires students to analyze three selected texts, posted the first week of each semester, and to place them in historical context. The rhetoric section calls on students to relate selected rhetorical texts to the rhetorical tradition and to composition theory.

Rhetoric and Professional Writing

An oral defense of the student's thesis proposal and oral demonstration of fundamental knowledge about theory and rhetoric of professional writing; research methodologies; and specialized areas in professional communication.

(For students admitted prior to Fall 2004) Questions on the theory of rhetoric and professional, technical communication; research methodologies; and specialized areas in technical communication. At least one semester before the examination, students should obtain reading lists of major sources from advisers in technical writing.

TESOL

Questions on TESOL theory and methodology; on core areas in linguistics; and on specialized areas in linguistics.

3.6.2. Procedures for the Examination

Texts set for particular plans in the M.A. program are announced by the department during the first week of each semester.

Students may consult appropriate faculty members and copies of all past comprehensive examinations (on reserve in Founders Memorial Library Reserve Room) to prepare for the examination.

Examinations are prepared by at least three graduate faculty members with expertise in the plans of study for the degree.

Four hours are allotted for the examination.

Students write the exam anonymously under an assigned letter code so that their identity is unknown to the examiners.

Students ordinarily write the exam by computer. Students who wish to write by hand must notify the Graduate Secretary in advance of the exam date.

3.6.3. Grading of the Examination

When the papers have been written, the Director of Graduate Studies circulates them (identified only by a letter code) to each of the examiners. Each examiner reads and grades exams and submits a grade of "pass," or "pass with distinction," or "fail" in a sealed envelope to the Director of Graduate Studies. If the results are not unanimous, the Director of Graduate Studies instructs the readers to hold a conference and issue a consensus ballot. When all ballots are returned, the Director of Graduate Studies tabulates the results and reports them, by mail, to each student.

Students failing the exam may request a meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies so that they may understand the strengths and weaknesses of their performance in preparation to take the examination a second time.

The exam may be repeated only once. It may be retaken in any subsequent semester.

3.7. Time Limits

Students must complete all requirements for the M.A. degree in six years. If a student drops out of the program (i.e., does not enroll in any courses) for more than two years, he or she must re-apply for admission through the Graduate School.

3.8. Graduation Procedures

In order to graduate, students must prepare the list of courses actually completed and submit it to the Director of Graduate Studies for approval to verify that their program of courses is up to date. Once it is approved, the Director of Graduate Studies will give one copy to the student, place one copy in the student's department file, and send one copy to the Graduate School (which uses it to certify the satisfaction of degree requirements). Any subsequent changes to the Program of Courses must also be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and forwarded to the Graduate School.

Complete an application to graduate (available online at www.grad.niu.edu).

Pay a processing fee.

3.9. Teacher Certification Program

The department offers a program in Teacher Certification in English. The initial teacher certification program in English qualifies students for the Standard High School Certificate (6-12) issued by the State of Illinois. The State issues certificates upon the recommendation of the Department of English and Northern Illinois University.

Admission to the program requires:

- formal application by candidates
- formal approval by the department

Students seeking an initial teaching certificate in English who have been admitted to any of the programs leading to a graduate degree in English should apply directly to the coordinator of teacher certification in English at the earliest possible date. See the Graduate Catalog for course requirements.

4. Certificates of Graduate Study

4.1. Certificate in English Education

The department of English offers courses leading to a certificate of graduate study in English education. This certificate recognizes successful completion of a set of courses intended to enhance the professional qualifications of teachers of English in the secondary schools. Only courses taken at NIU may be applied to the certificate. Successful completion requires a grade point average of at least 3.00 in the courses used to meet the requirements. Courses used to satisfy the requirements of the certificate may also be applied toward a graduate degree.

Total Course Requirements (18 semester hours)

At least 9 semester hours from the following:

ENGL 604	Topics in Materials for the English Classroom
ENGL 607	Topics in Literature (must have approved pedagogical topic)
ENGL 610	Rhetoric of Prose Composition
ENGL 622	Theories and Methods of TESOL
ENGL 629	Topics in Rhetoric (must have approved pedagogical topic)
ENGL 646	The Teaching Of Literature In Middle And High Schools*
ENGL 647	The Teaching of Writing in Middle and High Schools*
ENGL 648	Materials and Methods of Teaching English in Middle and High Schools*
ENGL 697	English Institute (1-6)

One 600-level literature course (3)

One course from the following: (3)

ENGL 601	Bibliography and Research Methods
ENGL 602A	Literary Theory and Criticism
ENGL 603	Traditions in Written Rhetoric
ENGL 609	Creative Writing
ENGL 692	Nonfiction Writing
ENGL 690	Film and Literature
ENGL 693A	Ethnic American Literature: African American Literature

One course from the following: (3)

ENGL 611	History of the English Language
ENGL 614	Introduction to Linguistics
ENGL 616	Pedagogical Grammar
ENGL 619	Varieties of English
ENGL 623	Second Language Acquisition

* strongly recommended

Upon certification of the completion of course work by the Graduate School, the Office of Registration and Records will contact the student regarding procedures for ordering an official, engraved 11" x 8 ½" Certificate of Graduate Study from Northern Illinois University.

4.2 . Certificate in Technical Writing

The Department of English offers courses leading to a certificate of graduate study in technical writing. This certificate recognizes successful completion of a set of courses intended to enhance the professional qualifications of technical writers. Only courses taken at NIU may be applied to the certificate. Successful completion requires a grade point average of at least 3.00 in the courses used to meet the requirements. Courses used to satisfy the requirements of the certificate may also be applied toward a graduate degree.

Total Course Requirements (18 semester hours)

- | | |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ENGL 626 | Technical Writing (3). Students with credit in ENGL 308 may substitute a 3 semester hour elective. |
| ENGL 627 | Technical Editing (3). Students with credit in ENGL 403 may substitute a 3 semester hour elective. |

*Course work from the following (12)**

- | | |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| ENGL 624 | Professional Writing Institute (1-6) |
| ENGL 625 | Methods of Research in Professional Writing (3) |
| ENGL 628 | Internship in Technical Writing, or Editing (1-6) |
| ENGL 630 | Theory and Research in Rhetoric and Professional Writing (3) |
| ENGL 631 | Topics in Professional Writing (3) |
| ENGL 632 | Writing for Electronic Media (3) |

*With approval of the certificate adviser, students may select up to 6 semester hours of electives from other English courses in rhetoric, language, linguistics, or writing or from appropriate courses in such other areas as communication, instructional technology, computer science, art, and business.

Upon certification of the completion of course work by the Graduate School, the Office of Registration and Records will contact the student regarding procedures for ordering an official, engraved 11" x 8 ½" Certificate of Graduate Study from Northern Illinois University.

5. Doctor of Philosophy in English

The Doctor of Philosophy degree represents the highest level of academic achievement formally recognized in the humanities. The degree is a symbol of distinguished standards of academic excellence and of mastery of advanced techniques in a discipline.

Our program of study leading to the Ph.D. is designed to prepare students for research and teaching and for positions of leadership in education and other fields. After analysis of the applicant's background and training, a graduate faculty member or the Director of Graduate Studies counsels the student in planning an appropriate program of study. Small graduate seminars enable students to develop the critical and investigative skills and insights necessary to successful scholarship, teaching, and leadership in education and other fields.

The doctoral degree in English is granted not only on the basis of successful completion of a definite number of prescribed courses but chiefly in recognition of the candidate's high attainments and ability as shown, first, by passing the required examinations in his or her fields and, second, by the completion of a dissertation.

5.1. Advising

Soon after admission to the program Ph.D. students should meet with the Director of Graduate Studies to evaluate their transcript of course work in the M.A. degree in relation to the core of courses required for the Ph.D. The Director of Graduate Studies may also approve transfer credit for up to 15 combined hours from NIU student-at-large course work and hours beyond the master's degree taken at another university.

5.2. Program of Courses

For students admitted to the Ph.D. program in the fall semester 1999 or later, and starting course work in spring semester 2000 and later. (If admitted before Fall 1999, see the Director of Graduate Studies.)

Students must secure departmental approval for a program of courses including a minimum of 90 hours beyond the baccalaureate (including 30 hours of M.A. course work and 30 hours of Ph.D. course work). Up to 30 hours of work completed as part of a master's program, and accepted as part of admission credentials, may be included in the 90 hours. Core and distribution requirements met at the M.A. level may fulfill, with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies, the requirements at the Ph.D. level, freeing students to take electives to complete the 30 hours beyond the M.A. required for the Ph.D.

Core Requirements (9 hours)

One course from each of the following groups:

Research Methodology (3 hrs): English 601, 608, 625

Issues in Criticism (3 hrs): English 602, 603

History of the Language (3 hrs): English 611, 612, 613

Distribution Requirements

British and American Literature (18 hrs). At least one from each of the following groups.

Normally, students should select 700-level courses only if they have studied the period or subject at the undergraduate or M.A. level. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the instructor and with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies.

Medieval: ENGL 635, 636, 637, 639, 736, 737

Renaissance: ENGL 638, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 738, 741, 742, 744

Long 18th Century: ENGL 656, 657, 658, 659, 756

19th Century British: ENGL 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 762, 764

Pre-1900 American: ENGL 676, 677, 678, 679, 776, 777

Post-1900 British, American and Postcolonial: 665, 666, 667, 668, 671, 681, 682, 684, 685, 687, 693, 765, 783

Language, Linguistics, and Rhetoric (9 hrs). At least one from each of the following groups.

Language/Linguistics: ENGL 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 633, 634, 714

Rhetoric: ENGL 602, 610, 624, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 703

When selecting courses, students must include the following:

At least two courses with a pedagogical or other applied component from two of the fields of language, literature, and rhetoric (e.g., ENGL 600 (3), 604, 610, 616, 621, 622, 628, 647, 696, 697, 700, 702, 703), and at least four 700-level seminars.

5.3. Foreign Language Requirements

Ph.D. candidates must demonstrate average proficiency in two foreign languages or high proficiency in one. (See section 3.2 of this handbook for means to satisfy requirements.)

Language requirements must be satisfied before taking candidacy examinations.

5.4. Candidacy Examinations

All Ph.D. students must pass three Ph.D. candidacy examinations: two written and one oral.

The two written examinations are selected from the following fields of study:

- I. Linguistics or philology
- II. Medieval literature (Old English literature and Middle English literature)
- III. English literature from 1500 to 1600 (including Shakespeare)
- IV. English literature from 1600 to 1660
- V. British literature from 1660 to 1800
- VI. British literature from 1800 to 1900
- VII. British literature since 1900
- VIII. American literature to 1865

- IX. American literature since 1865
- X. African-American literature
- XI. British and American women's literature since 1750
- XII. Film and Literature
- XIII. Rhetoric
- XIV. A special field as determined by an examination committee and the student in consultation. (See section 5.4.1 for procedures to propose a special field.)

The oral examination shall be an explanation and defense of the student's dissertation proposal, including its relation to the larger body of relevant knowledge and to the teaching of English or other professional pursuits.

5.4.1. Proposing a Special Field Examination

The student must submit the following:

- A bibliography of primary and secondary sources defining the area to be covered. Faculty must not be expected to supply the student with a bibliography; rather, it is up to the student to prepare a preliminary listing, to be submitted to the cooperating faculty for suggested revisions, in a process that may involve several go-rounds.
- After establishing a reading list satisfactory to the examiners, the student should next write a rationale for the proposed area in the form of an essay not to exceed five pages. The rationale/essay should provide a concise statement of (1) what is to be covered on the proposed exam, and (2) why a request for a special examination field is justified in this case (how this field differs from the regular fields listed in the Graduate Catalog and what it allows and accomplishes that the regular fields do not).
- A cover sheet (obtainable from the Graduate Secretary) signed by the examiners who approve the proposal and recommend that it be forwarded to the Graduate Studies Committee for consideration.

The proposal must be approved by the Graduate Director, along with the student's plan of courses and the other fields requested for the candidacy exams.

The special field proposal will then be considered by the Graduate Studies Committee, after which the student and the field committee will be notified in writing of the decision of the Graduate Studies Committee.

If the proposal is not approved, it is returned to the student and the examination committee with recommendations for revision.

5.4.2. Procedures for Admission to the Candidacy Examinations

Written candidacy examinations are offered twice a year: in August, two weeks prior to classes in the fall semester; and in January, in the week prior to classes in the spring semester. For admission to the examinations, a student must:

- Complete at least 20 of the 30 semester hours of graduate course work in the doctoral program of study
- Pass the foreign language requirements
- Apply to the Director of Graduate Studies no later than the second Monday in March for the August examinations and the first Monday in November for the January examinations

- Complete a petition to sit for the examinations and meet with the Director of Graduate Studies to complete a checklist of courses that ensures course preparation in the student's chosen fields

The Director of Graduate Studies checks the record of students who apply to make sure they have met all of the eligibility requirements for admission to the examinations, and then appoints appropriate examination committees to prepare the examinations.

Until one week before administration of the candidacy examinations, a student may request to withdraw his or her name from the list of students to be examined. This request must be made in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies.

5.4.3. Nature of the Written Candidacy Examinations

Students are expected to demonstrate that they possess an adequate body of information and the ability to make use of standard critical methodologies and techniques. In the administration of the examinations, every attempt is made to emphasize the generally agreed upon aspects of each field. In preparation for the examinations, students may wish to:

- Consult the file of previous candidacy examinations in the reserve area of Founders Memorial Library
- Consult with members of their examination committees prior to the examination (although students are in no way obliged to do so and may prefer to preserve anonymity). The Graduate Faculty wishes to emphasize that candidacy examinations are field examinations, designed in accordance with the demands of a field rather than the personal interests of individual examiners.

5.4.4. Administration of the Written Candidacy Examinations

Students are informed in writing of their admission to the examination and of the examiners in each field.

The Director of Graduate Studies appoints examiners for each field in which students have asked to be examined. Where there are more than three specialists in a field, assignments are generally rotated.

The identity of the students remains anonymous unless individual students choose to identify themselves to faculty in the process of consulting with them in preparation for the examinations. Frequently several students take the same field examinations, and examiners rarely know whose paper they are reading.

The examinations are administered over a period of a week. A period of four hours is allotted for the writing of each paper.

When the papers have been written, the Director of Graduate Studies circulates them (identified only by a letter code) to each of the examiners. Each reader submits one of three grades, either "pass" or "pass with distinction" or "fail," in a sealed envelope to the Director of Graduate Studies. If the results are not unanimous, the Director of Graduate Studies instructs the readers to confer and to issue a consensus ballot.

When all reports are in, the Director of Graduate Studies reports the results to the students, the Graduate School, and the Graduate Faculty of the department.

Students failing one or more fields may request a meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies and the convener of the committee that has set the exam(s).

5.4.5. Nature and Purpose of the Oral Examination

The third candidacy examination is an oral defense of the student's dissertation prospectus.

The purpose of this examination is to further the student's progress toward the start and completion of the dissertation by questioning the student, evaluating the student's dissertation prospectus, and making recommendations to sharpen the project. (The examination presumes that well in advance of sitting for candidacy examinations, the student has selected a dissertation director and, in consultation with the director, a dissertation committee. See Section 5.7 of this handbook.) To this end, a committee selected according to the procedures outlined below will examine the student for a period of one hour and consider the following:

- The clarity and viability of the hypothesis as something that will admit of development into a monograph—a 200-page study of a single subject
- The quality, scope, and depth of the ideas and questions around which the student will develop the monograph
- The student's readiness to narrow or enlarge the scope of the project in order to allow the results of the investigation to shape the dissertation
- The student's plan for completing the dissertation in a timely fashion

5.4.6. Procedures for the Oral Examination/Defense of the Dissertation Prospectus

In timely consultation with the prospective dissertation director and committee, the student will prepare a dissertation proposal.

In order to facilitate the student's movement through candidacy examinations and toward completion of the dissertation in a timely fashion (i.e., within the year following candidacy examinations), the oral examination process, including a second defense of the prospectus in the case of a failure, normally shall be completed in the same semester in which the written candidacy examinations have been passed.

Composition of the Prospectus

The proposal shall consist of a brief essay that outlines and provides a rationale for the dissertation's hypothesis, places it in the context of scholarship in the field, explains its anticipated methodology, and provides a tentative organization of the dissertation.

The proposal shall include, as well, a working bibliography. The bibliography must identify the primary works that will be the objects of study and the secondary works, theoretical and critical, that serve as the tools of analysis and constitute the scholarship in the area of the dissertation. The student must identify, with asterisks, at least five of the most significant secondary works that appear, in this early stage of the dissertation's development, to be crucial to the proposed study. During the defense of the prospectus, the student should be prepared (1) to explain how these five works relate to the subject, hypothesis, and methodology of the study; (2) what has been done on the subject; and (3) the place of the hypothesis in the scholarly conversation.

Scheduling the Examination

The proposal must be prepared by the student, signed by all members of the dissertation committee, and presented to the Director of Graduate Studies within 60 days following notification of successful completion of the written candidacy examinations. The signatures of the dissertation committee indicate their consent to permit an oral examination.

Within the following two weeks, the Director of Graduate Studies shall then appoint a 3-person examination committee. Normally, this committee will be identical with the dissertation committee.

Conduct and Results of the Examination

The committee shall examine the student on the prospectus for a period of one hour. Except where there are unforeseen difficulties, immediately following the examination the committee will report the results of the examination orally to the student and by ballot to the Director of Graduate Studies.

Should the student fail the examination, the examination committee shall supply to the student and to the members of the dissertation committee a written statement of recommendations for improvement of the prospectus.

The student shall then revise the original prospectus within 30 days of notification of failure and submit it to the dissertation committee for signatures.

The revised prospectus, signed by committee members, will then be delivered to the Director of Graduate Studies, who will schedule a second defense of the dissertation prospectus within one week..

5.4.7. Reexamination

Each failed examination, written or oral, may be retaken once. The procedure for reexamination is similar to that for the first attempt, except that even more detailed attention is devoted to the student's preparation.

Should a student fail any one of the examinations a second time, the Graduate School dismisses him or her from the doctoral program.

In sum, then:

If a student receives a grade of pass or pass with distinction in each of the examinations, he or she is recorded as having passed the examination.

If a student fails one or more of the examinations, he or she is recorded as having failed the candidacy examinations and must repeat the failed fields.

If upon repetition of the failed fields the student passes, he or she is then reported as having passed the candidacy examinations.

If the student fails any field a second time, no additional opportunities to take the examination are permitted.

Upon notification that a student has successfully completed course work, foreign language requirements, and the candidacy examinations, and that a dissertation director has been appointed, the Graduate School formally recognizes the student as a candidate for the doctoral degree.

5.5. Dissertation Requirements (30 Hours)

Early in the doctoral program of study, Ph.D. students should identify senior graduate faculty members (marked by an asterisk in the list of Graduate Faculty in section 12 of this handbook) from one of the fields of specialization who might serve as the director of the dissertation. Selection of the dissertation director is the responsibility and prerogative of the individual student, though advice about this selection may be sought from the assigned adviser or the Director of Graduate Studies. The dissertation director, once identified, becomes the student's primary adviser.

Ultimately, of course, the dissertation is the undertaking that distinguishes a doctoral degree from other academic degrees and contributes to the reputation it enjoys as the highest degree that academe can offer. It is evidence that the student can perform as an independent and original scholar and make, as the Graduate Catalog phrases it, "a substantial contribution to knowledge."

Ideally, graduate students begin work toward the dissertation the day that they begin graduate study. They should carefully select related courses that will lead toward a specialization in a given area and allow them to produce a connected body of work. The "unfinished business" and unanswered questions of any course provide prime material for dissertation topics. Seminar papers may lead to proposals or even dissertation chapters. Preparation for candidacy examinations should immerse students even more deeply in the literature, criticism, or theory they have identified as a major area, particularly if they design a special field examination. The value of the working relationships students establish with faculty in their area of interest cannot be underestimated. One should not, therefore, view the dissertation as a completely separate requirement to be put off until the time of candidacy examinations. Rather, the dissertation process begins much earlier.

5.6. The Dissertation Committee

The dissertation committee consists of at least three members of the Graduate Faculty, one of whom serves as director of the dissertation and two of whom serve as readers. Well in advance of the oral candidacy examination, and in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies, the student shall have identified a dissertation director. In consultation with the student, the dissertation director recommends the other members of the dissertation committee to the Director of Graduate Studies.

5.7. Continuous Enrollment in ENGL 799

After completing 60 hours of graduate course work, (30 in the M.A., 30 in the Ph.D.) passing language proficiency, and passing candidacy examinations, students enroll in ENGL 799 as they begin formally writing the dissertation. Thereafter, the student must enroll in at least one hour of ENGL 799 every semester, including summers, until graduation, for a total of at least thirty credit hours. This rule applies with no exceptions unless a student requests and receives a formal leave of absence from the Graduate School.

5.8. The Dissertation Defense

Upon the completion of the dissertation to the satisfaction of the dissertation director and the other two members of the dissertation committee, the student may proceed to the oral defense of the dissertation. In addition to the manuscript form and content required by the departmental committee, the dissertation must conform to the requirements of the Graduate School as specified in The Graduate School Manual for Theses and Dissertations, which may be viewed online at www.grad.niu.edu/audience/thesis.shtml. At the time of the defense, the manuscript may be in final draft, pending identification of generally minor changes during the defense, or in a "defense draft" which awaits final revision following the defense.

Purpose: Scholarship, by its very nature, requires that it be articulated clearly and persuasively and be subjected to critical review by others. Thus, the defense is a forum in which the candidate's work is scrutinized by members of the academic community to ascertain whether the candidate can (1) satisfactorily explain the significance of their new contribution to scholarship in a particular field and (2) articulately respond to questions, concerns, and criticisms about the work, thereby demonstrating a command of all aspects of the work and how it fits within a disciplinary framework.

Timing: The oral defense of the dissertation occurs after the dissertation committee has formally approved a defense-ready draft of the dissertation and at least three weeks after this approved draft has been submitted to the Graduate School. (See procedures below.)

Preparedness: A candidate's preparedness for the defense depends largely upon the quality of the dissertation itself. Therefore, the dissertation director must ensure that the dissertation has reached a stage at which it can be defended successfully and must determine that the substantive research, analysis, and writing have been completed. For although a candidate may fail the defense of a good dissertation, no candidate may successfully defend a poor one.

Decorum: The nature of the defense derives from the second definition of *defend*: "to support or maintain, as by argument or action; to justify" (*American Heritage Dictionary*). The defense will be serious and intellectually rigorous. Neither the candidate nor the dissertation committee members can presume the successful outcome of the defense.

Format: The defense normally takes from 90 to 120 minutes. It is convened by the Director of Graduate Studies as a non-participant and is chaired by the dissertation director. The defense consists of three parts: (1) a public presentation of the work by the candidate (about 20 minutes), (2) a restricted examination by the dissertation committee, and (3) questions from the dean's designee and other guests.

Results: Upon completion of the defense, the candidate and guests are excused while the committee decides whether the defense was successful and whether the dissertation requires further revisions before the candidate submits the final copy to the Graduate School. These decisions are immediately conveyed to the candidate in person and are then reported to the Graduate School. If the defense is not successful, the dissertation director will meet with the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss the specifics of the case and to agree upon an appropriate course of action.

Assessment: In addition to the above procedures, the department monitors the overall quality of oral defenses by having the Director of Graduate Studies review the evaluation forms completed by dean's designees of the Graduate School following each defense.

Once a year, the Graduate Studies Director reports the findings from these reviews to the Department Chair.

5.8.1. Procedures for Arranging the Defense

At least four weeks prior to defense:

The candidate applies for graduation by the deadline listed on the Graduate School Calendar. The candidate fills out and submits the *Application for Graduation* form along with the required fee. The application is available online at www.grad.niu.edu.

The candidate will receive a letter from the Graduate School records officer stating graduation requirements. Questions about the letter should be addressed to the records officer as soon as possible to guarantee on-time graduation.

The candidate makes arrangements for the defense with the dissertation director, committee members, and the Director of Graduate Studies.

The Director of Graduate Studies registers the defense with the Graduate School, notifying them of the date set for the defense by submitting the *Request for Appointment of Committee to Conduct an Oral Defense of Dissertation* form.

In order for the defense to be scheduled, a majority of the committee, with a minimum of three signatures (including the dissertation director's), must sign the Graduate School's *Request for Appointment of Committee to Conduct an Oral Defense of Dissertation* form (available from the Graduate Secretary). The Director of Graduate Studies must also sign the form.

Note: Signatures indicate that the committee members have read the dissertation and judged it to be ready for defense. Signatures do not indicate final approval.

At least three weeks prior to defense:

The candidate submits to the Director of Graduate Studies two copies of a completed, defense-ready draft of the dissertation. The manuscript must conform to the form and content required by the dissertation committee and the requirements of the Graduate School as specified in *The Graduate School Manual for Theses and Dissertations*, available on the Graduate School website and at the Holmes Student Center Bookstore.

One copy is forwarded to the Graduate School to be read by a graduate faculty member from another department who is designated by the Dean of the Graduate School to be his or her representative at the defense.

The second copy is left with the Director of Graduate Studies, who announces its availability to interested department members and invites the faculty and graduate students of the department to attend the defense.

Following a successful defense:

- The dissertation committee signs the Graduate School's Approval of Thesis, Dissertation, or Documentation form. Typically, approval is subject to the candidate making minor changes in the dissertation following the defense.

- The candidate prepares the post-defense version of the dissertation in accordance with the Graduate School requirements and deadlines.
- The candidate submits the post-defense version electronically, following the guidelines on the Grad School website.
- The dissertation readers in the Graduate School contact the candidate with detailed instructions regarding corrections and preparation of the final electronic submission of the dissertation.
- The candidate files the final electronic version with the Graduate School on or before the Graduate School deadline.
http://www.grad.niu.edu/audience/current_students.shtml
- The Graduate School sends a copy of the dissertation back to the department early the following semester.

5.8.2. Time Limits

Students must complete all requirements for the Ph.D. degree in nine years. If a student does not register for more than twenty-four months without approval of a formal leave of absence, he or she must re-apply for admission through the Graduate School in order to continue.

6. Field and Course Offerings

The department offers specialized study in the traditional fields of graduate study in English. In the Ph.D., students not only may specialize in one of these fields, but on the basis of available Graduate Faculty and curriculum may also design a special field. The Graduate Faculty demonstrates strong research, publication, and teaching credentials in both the traditional as well as the more innovative fields of contemporary literary studies. The faculty's areas of expertise are listed in section 12 of this handbook. Students are welcome to discuss the nature of study in these fields with any of the faculty.

To support these fields, the Graduate Faculty has approved a variety of 600-level courses and 700-level seminars in each area. A regular rotation of all these courses has been established by the Director of Graduate Studies and area faculty, and students can expect that a suitable variety of courses will be repeated over any two-year period. Under a number of special topics (e.g. ENGL 604, ENGL 607, ENGL 707), the department regularly offers courses in developing areas of research and teaching. These courses may be repeated as the topic changes.

All students in the graduate program, at whatever level of classification, may take 600-level courses, and with prior course work OR with the approval of the instructor and the Director of Graduate Studies, 700-level courses. No undergraduate courses in English carry graduate course credit, though graduate students may take undergraduate course work in English or any other department for the experience of the course. Graduate students in English may also take graduate courses in other departments, but they must have approval to include them in a master's or doctoral program of study. If a graduate English course is designated as a permit course, that permit is obtained from the Graduate Secretary with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies.

7. Standards and Evaluations

The department is concerned to maintain high standards in its graduate programs and regularly evaluates the students, faculty, and curriculum in these programs. Graduate courses are approved only after scrutiny by the Graduate Faculty, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee, and the Graduate Council. Faculty are admitted to Full Graduate Faculty and then Senior Graduate Faculty status only after scrutiny of their teaching, research, and publishing credentials by the department, the College, and the Graduate School. Only Senior Graduate Faculty members are permitted to direct dissertations.

Graduate students are evaluated from the time of their application for admission to the program until the time of their graduation. The Graduate School requires that students maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average in graduate courses (which means that every grade of C must be balanced by a grade of A), and graduate students are urged to familiarize themselves with the Graduate School policies on minimum grade point average. Faculty members may assign a grade of Incomplete in extraordinary or emergency circumstances. The Incomplete grade can only be reversed to a letter grade within 120 days from the last day of classes in the semester it was given. Beyond this point, the grade becomes a permanent “F” on the student’s transcript. Courses graded Incomplete do not count toward degree requirements. With permission of instructors of courses and the Director of Graduate Studies, students may audit courses. Audited courses do not, however, fulfill degree requirements.

8. Graduate Assistantships

The department offers financial support in the pursuit of graduate degrees in the form of graduate assistantships. The large majority of these are teaching assistantships in the First-Year Composition program. Occasionally, a few appointments are available for graduate research assistants, who are assigned to assist individual faculty members with specific research projects. Editorial assistantships are also available on a competitive basis to doctoral students to work with the professional journal *Style*, published in the English department.

Graduate students in the M.A. or Ph.D. programs who have not previously taught at the college level are appointed as Teaching Interns and are required to take ENGL 600 College Teaching of English. ENGL 600 is a course in the pedagogy of teaching freshman rhetoric and composition and is taken during both semesters of the first year of appointment as a teaching assistant.

8.1. Applications

Application for assistantships is made to the Director of Graduate Studies by February 15th each year. Applications for admission and for assistantships are considered at the same time, so if an applicant's admission credentials are incomplete, a decision on an assistantship will be delayed.

Requirements for appointment:

Graduate Assistants must be admitted to a degree program in English and show a minimum verbal score on the GRE exam of 550 (exceptions can be made only in extraordinary circumstances). Offers of assistantship appointments are made by April 1st for the nine months of the academic year which begins the following August.

8.2. International Students

Because graduate assistantships are primarily devoted to the teaching of First-Year Composition, the department generally makes no appointments of non-native speakers of English in their first year in the department. International students who wish to teach in the Department of English and whose native language is not English must take the SPEAK Test and score 250 or better on that test to teach in the department.

8.3. Renewal of Appointment

As long as students make satisfactory progress toward their degrees and perform their teaching duties satisfactorily, assistantships are routinely renewable for the following year. Students in the M.A. program may receive assistantships for two years, students in the Ph.D. program for five years. The minimum requirements for renewal are as follows:

Minimum Requirements for First Appointment in the M.A. Program

- Admission to Graduate School
- Recommendation of the Graduate Admissions Committee
- A completed baccalaureate (B.A., B.S.) degree

Minimum Requirements for Second Appointment in the M.A. Program

- Completion of the hours stipulated in the appointment with a GPA of at least 3.0
- Successful completion of ENGL 600 (if required)
- Submission of an approved program of study
- Satisfactory performance of assigned teaching, research, or editorial duties

Minimum Requirements for First Appointment in the Ph.D. Program

- Admission to the Graduate School
- Recommendation of the Graduate Admissions Committee
- Completion of the M.A. or waiver of the M.A. for those going directly into the Ph.D. program from the B.A.

Minimum Requirements for Second Appointment in the Ph.D. Program

- Completion of the hours stipulated in the appointment with a satisfactory GPA
- Submission of an approved program of study
- Satisfactory performance of assigned teaching, research, or editorial duties

Minimum Requirements for Third Appointment in the Ph.D. Program

- Completion of hours stipulated in the appointment with a satisfactory GPA
- Revision of program of study, if necessary
- Satisfactory performance of assigned teaching, research, or editorial duties

Minimum Requirements for Fourth Appointment in the Ph.D. Program

- Completion of course work for the Ph.D. with a satisfactory GPA
- Satisfaction of the language requirement
- Satisfactory performance of assigned teaching, research, or editorial duties

Minimum Requirements for Fifth Appointment in the Ph.D. Program

- A passing grade on the candidacy examinations by the end of the spring semester prior to fifth appointment
- Approval of prospectus, topic, and dissertation director
- Admission to candidacy
- Satisfactory performance of assigned teaching, research, or editorial duties

8.4. Teaching Assignments

Graduate assistants may teach in a variety of courses at the freshman and sophomore levels, though the predominant assignment is in English 103 and 104, the 6-hour sequence of courses in rhetoric and composition required of all students in the university. Other assignments include sections of Communication Skills and English as a Second Language sections in English 103, English 105 and 105 Honors for advanced freshmen, the Communication Skills laboratory, the ESL Clinic, the Writing Center, English 207 Practical Grammar, and English 250 Practical Writing. Assignments are made jointly by the Director of Graduate Studies and either the First-Year Composition Director or the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

8.5. Categories of Teaching Assistants

8.5.1. Interns (TIs: Students Without Teaching Experience at the College Level)

Contract: 9 months

Teaching duties: 1 course of first-year composition fall semester and 2 spring semester

Required enrollment: ENGL 600, two terms (3 hours credit per semester); additional graduate courses, 2 courses/6 hours each term (fall and spring semesters)

Stipend: Tuition waiver for the academic year, tuition waiver for the summer term immediately preceding or following, and a yearly stipend.

8.5.2. Teaching Assistants in the M.A. Program (TAs: students with teaching experience at the college level)

Contract: 9 months

Teaching duties: normally 2 courses fall semester and 1 course spring semester

Required enrollment: 3 graduate courses/9 hours each term (fall and spring semesters)

Stipend: Tuition waiver for the academic year, tuition waiver for the summer term immediately preceding or following, and a yearly stipend.

8.5.3. Teaching Assistants in the Ph.D. Program (TA I, II, III, IV, V: students with teaching experience at the college level)

Contract: 9 months

Teaching duties: normally 2 courses fall and spring semesters

Required enrollment: 3 graduate courses/9 hours each term (fall and spring semesters)

Stipend: Tuition waiver for the academic year, tuition waiver for the summer term immediately preceding or following, and a yearly stipend.

8.5.4. Research Assistants (RAs)

Contract: 11 months

Duties: Up to 20 hours per week (10 hours in the 8-week summer term), chiefly in connection with staff members' research or as an editorial assistant for one of the department's journals.

Required enrollment: 3 graduate courses each term; 2 courses in the 8-week summer term.

Stipend: Tuition waiver for the academic year, tuition waiver for the summer term immediately preceding or following, and a yearly stipend.

8.6. Other Assistantship Opportunities

Occasionally, other non-academic cost centers of the university (for example, the Library or Student Housing) employ graduate students through graduate assistantships. A list of such centers is available on the Human Resource Services website (www.hr.niu.edu).

8.7. Fellowships

The university offers several types of fellowships. All offer stipends and carry a 12-month tuition waiver. Fellows are full-time students. They are not required to teach or do any work in the department, although they may choose to teach one course.

University Fellowship for beginning M.A. candidates: Students receive a 12-month tuition waiver and a stipend; they must take 4 courses each term during fall and winter (summer courses optional). *University Fellowship for second-year M.A. candidates:* Students receive a 12-month tuition waiver and a stipend; they must take 3 courses each term during fall and winter (summer courses optional).

Dissertation Completion Award for advanced Ph.D. candidates: Students receive a 12-month tuition waiver, a stipend, and a research support fund; they are to spend this year completing the dissertation. Information is available in late November each year in the office of the Associate Dean of the Graduate School.

9. Special Programs and Awards

9.1. Oxford University

The department each summer offers a five-week program of study at Oxford University, in which students may earn as many as nine hours of graduate credit. Courses are offered by NIU faculty and sometimes by the faculty of Oxford. Students reside at Oriel college and have access to the Oxford and other libraries and to research facilities in London, such as the British Museum. Specific information about the faculty, courses, and costs are available from the Graduate Secretary late in the fall semester.

9.2. Media and Culture in Ireland

This is an ongoing institutional relationship between the Northern Illinois University Departments of Communication and English and Dublin City University. The program is in response to a growing interest among Americans in Irish media (which has produced such popular films as *My Left Foot*, *The Field*, *Michael Collins*, *The Crying Game*, and *In the Name of the Father*) along with general interest in Irish culture as evidenced through Irish Studies Programs which are currently offered by many American colleges and universities. Students will become sophisticated in issues of international culture via an immersion in Irish politics, history, literature, and media.

9.3. Newberry Library

The English department is a member of the Newberry Library Center for Renaissance Studies. Each semester a number of special seminars are offered at the Newberry by national and international scholars in fields related to the library's collections. The Director of Graduate Studies announces these courses as information is received from the library. Students may take these courses and with the permission of the Director of Graduate Studies and are also eligible for special funding to cover the costs of commuting to Chicago for the course. Students may also use the collections at the Newberry for research purposes.

Information about research at the Newberry (or at the libraries of Northwestern University, the University of Chicago, or the University of Wisconsin-Madison) is available from the Director of Graduate Studies.

9.4. Awards

A number of awards have been established to recognize the work of graduate students in English:

- The Graduate Faculty Oxford Fellowship, the Russell Durning Family Memorial Fellowship, and the Jeannie A. Hains Endowment provide assistance to students enrolled in the Oxford Program.
- Graduate School Research Assistantships may be available for students going to Oxford.
- Rhoten Smith Assistantships available for minority students on appointment as graduate assistants.
- Several fellowships/scholarships are administered by the Graduate School. (<http://www.grad.niu.edu/diversity/fellowships.shtml>).
- The annual Arnold Fox Award for Excellence in Research Writing recognizes outstanding research by graduate students.

10. The English Graduate Student Association (EGSA)

The English Graduate Student Association coordinates a number of formal activities within the graduate program, such as:

- scholarly symposia
- social gatherings
- student evaluations of teaching in all graduate courses each semester
- sponsorship of speakers through the Graduate Colloquium Series each semester
- election of a representative to the English Graduate Studies Committee as a voting member
- appointment of a graduate student to the University Graduate Colloquium Committee
- nomination of a graduate student representative to the University Graduate Council

All graduate students in English are members of the English Graduate Student Association, and all graduate students are invited to participate in EGSA activities.

10.1. Graduate Conference

Each spring semester, graduate students sponsor a conference, the Midwestern Conference on Literature, Language, and Media, featuring keynote speakers selected by the graduate students. Graduate students are strongly encouraged to participate in the conference and to take advantage of the opportunity it provides for professional development: presentation of papers in language, literature, and film, and discussions with colleagues from a variety of schools.

11. Job Placement

Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the services provided by the department Job Placement Adviser, who can be contacted through the Director of

Graduate Studies. As they near completion of their degrees and before starting on the job search, students can work with the adviser to put together a placement dossier. Even before searching, students should look at the MLA Job Information List and The Chronicle of Higher Education, available in the department, so that they can get an idea of what lies ahead. The Graduate Secretary also keeps up a browsing file of job notices received directly from other universities; job notices may also be posted as space permits, on the Graduate Employment bulletin board outside of Reavis 215.

All students, but particularly doctoral students, should consider joining the Modern Language Association. Student rates are very reasonable, and ABDs are very likely to have interviews later at the annual MLA meeting. Also, as members, students receive announcements of meeting programs and thus opportunities for the submission of papers for presentation at various sessions during the meeting. Students may also remain abreast of calls for papers, jobs, and professional exchange by joining the college section of the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE).

Additionally, students may wish to contact recent graduates through the department for advice on job searches, placement, and publishing. The professional careers of alumni are continuing reflections on the English Department and of utmost interest to the faculty, whom students should feel free to consult for recommendations and assistance.

12. The Graduate Faculty

(asterisks indicate senior membership)

- *Gulsat Aygen (Ph.D., Harvard University), Linguistics
- *William Baker (Ph.D., University of London), 19th-century British literature, Bibliography
- Scott Balcerzak (Ph.D., University of Florida), Film and media studies
- *Alexandra Bennett (Ph.D., Brandeis University), Renaissance and 17th-century literature
- *Betty Birner (Ph.D., Northwestern University), Linguistics
- *David Bywaters (Ph.D., Washington University), 18th-century British literature
- *Susan Callahan (Ph.D., University of Louisville), Rhetoric and composition, teacher training
- *Edward Callary (Ph.D., Louisiana State University), Linguistics
- *Jeffrey Chown (Ph.D., University of Michigan), Film (adjunct member)
- *Nicole Clifton (Ph.D., Cornell University), Medieval literature and language
- *Michael Day (Ph.D., University of California-Berkeley), Rhetoric
- *Deborah DeRosa (Ph.D., University of North Carolina), Later 19th-century American literature
- *Susan Deskis (Ph.D., Harvard University), Medieval literature and language
- Sue Doederlein (Ph.D., Northwestern University), 18th-century British literature, Feminist theory
- Jeff Einboden (Ph.D., University of Cambridge), 19th-century American literature

- *Philip Eubanks (Ph.D., University of Illinois), Rhetoric, writing studies, technical writing
- *Keith Gandal (Ph.D., University of California-Berkeley), Later 19th-century American literature
- *Ibis Gómez-Vega (Ph.D., University of Houston), American literature, Ethnic American literature
- *David Gorman (Ph.D., Columbia University), Literary theory
- *Jeffrey Johnson (Ph.D., University of Missouri-Columbia), Renaissance and 17th-century literature
- *William Johnson (Ph.D., University of Iowa), Renaissance and 17th-century literature
- *Mark Kipperman (Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania), 19th-century British literature
- *John Knapp (Ph.D., University of Illinois), 20th-century British literature, Teacher training
- *Amy Levin (Ph.D., City University of New York), 19th- and 20th-century British literature, Women's studies
- *Doris Macdonald (Ph.D., Louisiana State University), Applied linguistics
- *Brian May (Ph.D., University of Virginia), 19th-century British literature
- *Amy Newman (Ph.D., Ohio University), Creative writing
- *Bradley Peters (Ph.D., University of Iowa), Rhetoric and composition
- *Kathleen Renk (Ph.D., University of Iowa), 20th-century British literature and Postcolonial literature
- Jessica Reyman (Ph.D., University of Minnesota), writing studies, technical writing
- Timothy Ryan (Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno), 20th-century American literature, African-American literature
- *John Schaeffer (Ph.D., St. Louis University), Rhetoric, Renaissance and 17th-century literature
- *Sean Shesgreen (Ph.D., Northwestern University), 18th-century British literature
- *Diana Swanson (Ph.D., University of Minnesota), 19th- and 20th-century British fiction, Feminist theory, Women's studies
- David Sweet, (Ph.D., Columbia University), Comparative literature
- *Mark Van Wienen (Ph.D., University of Illinois), 19th- and 20th-century American literature